

# PROFESSIONAL FORUM



## Light Infantry Snipers Let's Standardize Personnel and Equipment

LIEUTENANT KEVIN P. DRAGNETT

The November-December 1991 issue of *INFANTRY* included an article titled "Snipers: A Neglected Combat Multiplier," by Captain Philip K. Abbott. The author offered much useful information about the history, employment, and selection of snipers. He also discussed briefly the lack of equipment allowances for snipers under the current modified tables of organization and equipment (MTOEs). The problem, however, is much worse than he pictured it.

To say that there is a lack of personnel and equipment is a serious understatement. Only one soldier with the additional skill identifier (ASI) of B4, Sniper (awarded upon successful completion of the U.S. Army Sniper School at Fort Benning) is authorized per squad, and the sniper rifle is the only authorized piece of equipment. According to the TOE, the sniper should be assigned to a scout squad and employed as part of the squad. But the soldier who is authorized the B4 ASI is not an additional soldier but one of the five authorized in a scout squad.

In a battalion in the 7th Infantry Division, the snipers are primarily organized as a squad and employed as two-man sniper teams or as a fourth scout

squad. Most commanders and scout platoon leaders have learned that organizing the snipers as a separate squad improves both sniper training and tactical employment. Since the sniper squads are being used throughout the division, however, the lack of a TOE-authorized sniper squad in each scout platoon has created a serious lack of equipment and personnel. The absence of an authorized sniper squad is an issue that requires immediate attention at the highest levels of Infantry branch.

With the sniper squad organized as part of the scout platoon, it can be—and often is—employed as a fourth scout squad, particularly for intelligence collection. Although this may not be the best use of three sniper teams, it may be necessary because of conditions of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time). The sniper squad augments the light infantry battalion's ability to collect tactical information.

Many professional infantrymen may debate specific personnel and equipment requirements, but without current standards these discussions are irrelevant. As an immediate solution, we need a basic TOE change that includes one sniper squad per scout platoon. The snipers, like any other unit, will be fine-

tuned with advances in technology, improved techniques, and changes in the force structure.

Since the current light infantry battalion MTOE makes no allowance for sniper positions, the soldiers who call themselves snipers are not being recognized by the Army. For example, a staff sergeant performing the duties of a sniper squad leader, who carries the MOS 11B30B4, is not filling an authorized position in the light infantry battalion. He is normally assigned to the battalion in a rifleman slot (11B10), or to the headquarters company in the "reassignable overstrength" category. The sniper squad leader is not shown as a rifle squad leader because if he were he would be taking the slot from the actual squad leader.

Thus, noncommissioned officers who hold positions of great responsibility that require intense specialized training are not being recognized by the Department of the Army for their unique qualifications and critical mission. Although their NCO evaluation reports explain their duties and responsibilities, the slotted positions shown on their Forms 2A may adversely affect their chances for promotion to sergeant first class.

All soldiers "assigned" to the sniper squad are, in fact, assigned to rifle companies as riflemen or to the headquarters company as excess. Some may argue that the sniper team, which consists of two men, is assigned to a rifle company because it will be employed by that company. Nevertheless, there are no authorized sniper positions within the rifle company in light units. Since we have already recognized the need for the sniper squad, collected volunteer soldiers from the companies, and "attached" these soldiers to the scout platoon as a sniper squad, we should make the sniper squad an authorized part of every light infantry scout platoon. The current process hurts both the soldiers and the sniper program and does not ensure that skilled snipers will be on hand when they are needed.

## ORGANIZING

Organizing the sniper squad as part of the scout platoon would be an effective way of training the snipers and ensuring that they were employed effectively. This arrangement would allow for three sniper teams to be under the control of the battalion S-3 and S-2, respectively, for delivering long-range precision fire and for intelligence collection. With the snipers organized at battalion level, the sniper squad leader and the scout platoon leader would become sniper employment officers. The sniper teams would therefore be employed by officers more familiar with their capabilities and the missions assigned them. Sniper teams would retain the flexibility to be attached to the rifle companies on the basis of the mission task organization.

Since the MTOE does not prescribe the composition of a sniper squad, each battalion now builds its sniper squad as it sees fit. A better solution would be to standardize the composition of these squads to give light infantry commanders an asset with standardized personnel, equipment, and training. The seven-man sniper squad that Captain Abbott mentions in his article should be organized as shown in Table 1.

This organization would allow all snipers to be assigned in authorized sniper positions. The seven-man squad would allow for three sniper teams with one squad leader. Each team would be led by an NCO who is both Ranger and sniper qualified, and the sniper team leader would be the observer. This organization should be listed as a separate paragraph within the scout platoon's personnel allowance.

Sniper equipment consists entirely of the M24 sniper rifle, but a sniper team also needs a secure radio, night vision devices, observation equipment, and self-protection weapons. This equipment is now hand-receipted from the rifle companies. Since a rifle company is currently authorized eight AN/PRC-77 radios with KY-57 secure devices, the companies can hardly afford to provide radios to the snipers. And since communications equipment exemplifies the austerity of a light infantry rifle company, the sniper squad cannot expect to fill all of its equipment needs by borrowing.

Training Circular 23-14, Sniper Training and Employment, dated June 1989, discusses the equipment that each sniper team should carry: The team leader (observer) should carry an M16A2 for the protection of the team. The sniper should carry the sniper rifle—M24 or M21—and an M9 pistol.

Currently, headquarters companies are not authorized enough M16s or M9 pistols to meet this requirement.

TC 23-14 also discusses observation devices. Although M22 binoculars are abundant in a light battalion, the M49 observation telescope is not authorized and therefore cannot be borrowed from the unit. (The 20-power magnification and maximum light transmission of the M49 make it the best sniper observation device.) Additionally, as presently structured, the snipers either borrow night observation devices such as the AN/PVS-7B and AN/PVS-4 or continue their mission without them.

As with personnel allowances, sniper equipment allowances are not standardized. Scout platoons equip their snipers the best they can by signing for equipment from the rifle companies. Although this equipment is usually borrowed on a long-term basis, it is still on another unit's MTOE and property book hand receipt and may have to be returned at any time. How well the snipers are equipped often depends upon the commander's needs and his views concerning the effectiveness of the snipers as opposed to the effectiveness of the rifle companies.

Sniper equipment allocations must be standardized to provide commanders with an effective well-equipped asset.

NUMBER				
POSITION	REQUIRED	RANK	MOS	ASI
Sniper Squad Leader	1	SSG	11B3G	B4
Sniper Team Leader	3	SGT	11B2G	B4
Sniper	3	CPL	11B10	

Table 1

LINE	DESCRIPTION	REQ
C62375	Battery Case: Z-AJ-E1	3
N05482	Night Vision Goggles: AN/PVS-7B	3
N04732	Night Vision Sight, Ind. Weapon: AN/PVS-4	3
O21483	Radiacmeter: IM-174/PD	3
O38299	Radio Set: AN/PRC-77	3
S01373	Speech Security Equipment: TSEC/KY-57	3
V35477	Telescope, Straight Military: M49	3

Table 2

The sniper squad should be authorized the equipment shown in Table 2. Again, M16A2 rifles and M9 pistols are required, but they must be added to the equipment allowance of the headquarters company.

The current system for requesting changes to an MTOE is lengthy and time-consuming, and it requires

approval at all levels of the Army, but the absence of snipers is an issue that requires more immediate attention. Many infantry professionals may argue with my recommended personnel and equipment lists. But professional debate concerning the composition of light infantry snipers, particularly at the highest levels of the infantry, is the first

step toward revitalizing the sniper program and recognizing the very special men we call "snipers."

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# Leadership

## The Tenth Principle of War

**CAPTAIN RICHARD A. TURNER**

FM 100-5 explains that wars are fought and won by men, not by machines, and that the fluid nature of war places a premium on sound leadership. If leadership is as important as we think it is, it needs to be included in our Principles of War.

The Principles of War, from the work of J.F.C. Fuller, are guidelines for our Army to use in conducting warfare. According to Field Manual 100-5, Operations, we adopted these nine Principles of War in 1921 and have revised them only slightly since that time. Given the great importance of leadership in today's Army, and the effectiveness of U.S. leaders throughout history, it is now time for another revision: I propose that *Leadership* be added as the tenth, and most important, principle. I offer evidence, based on two key manuals and two historical examples, to support this proposal:

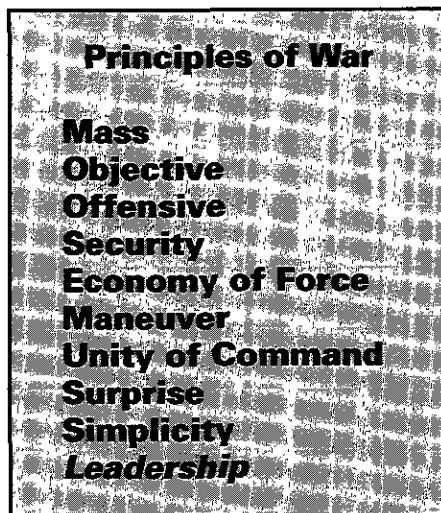
FM 100-5 identifies leadership as an element of combat power. The leader decides the degree to which maneuver, security, and economy of force are to be emphasized. Leaders also decide the

degree to which the other six Principles of War are to be emphasized. It certainly takes a leader to decide what *Objective* must be taken or how to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative (*Offensive* principle). *Unity of Command* dictates that for

says that our success as an army depends greatly on outstanding leadership. It explains that quality leadership is essential if a nation is to have an army that is ready to fight. This is especially important today, given the wide variety of contingencies for which the Army must be prepared. This manual is devoted to training and developing leaders so our army will be as successful in the future as it has been in the past. This devotion to training leaders is another reason *Leadership* should be included in our Principles of War.

One example of the kind of leadership that can pull victory from the jaws of defeat is from the Battle of Gettysburg. The 20th Maine, commanded by Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain, was ordered to hold Little Round Top at all costs. Colonel Chamberlain had 15 minutes in which to place his regiment in position and did so in an outstanding fashion.

Two Confederate regiments attacked the 20th Maine's position at least six times, inflicting heavy casualties, but were repeatedly repulsed. During a lull



every objective there should be one commander or leader. In fact, all of the principles rely on timely and accurate leadership decisions.

FM 22-100, Military Leadership,